

WHAT IS CLAIMED:

1. A method for a call center to establish a successful connection between an agent and a caller when no agent is immediately available to said caller, comprising the steps of:

5 a. after receiving a first inbound call from said caller, automatically assigning and keeping a place for said caller in a waiting queue;

b. assigning an identification and a time window to said caller within which said caller shall call back to claim said place in said queue;

c. electronically informing said caller of said time window;

10 d. disconnecting said call; and

e. upon receiving a second inbound call from said caller within said time window, verifying said caller by said identification and resuming said place of said caller in said waiting queue.

15 2. The method of claim 1 wherein said time window is automatically determined on an average waiting time that each caller has to wait for an available agent.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein said average waiting time is obtained from actual statistics.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein said step b further comprises a step of providing a plurality of time windows to said caller to select one from them.

20 5. The method of claim 1 further comprising a step of, after step d, reminding said caller to make said second inbound call.

6. The method of claim 5 wherein said step of reminding is carried out by electronically dialing a telephone of said caller and hanging up before said caller answers.

7. The method of claim 6 wherein said step of reminding is implemented just before or when said time window begins.

8. The method of claim 6 wherein said step of reminding is implemented when an agent is actually available to said caller.

5 9. The method of claim 6 wherein said hanging up is effectuated immediately after one ring of said telephone.

10. The method of claim 1 wherein said step b further includes a step of electronically informing said caller of said identification.

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11. The method of claim 1 wherein said identification is a ~~telephone-number~~ of a telephone from which said first inbound call was place.

12. The method of claim 11 wherein said telephone number is automatically retrieved by an automatic number identification system of said call center.

13. The method of claim 1 wherein said step e further comprises a step of prompting said caller to provide said identification.

15 14. The method of claim 1 further comprising a step of erasing said place and identification of said caller after said time window.

15. The method of claim 1 wherein said time window begins immediately after said step d.

20 16. The method of claim 15 wherein said step e further comprises a step of bumping said place of said caller up to the top of said queue if said caller calls back within said time window but after a time of his turn in said queue.

17. The method of claim 1 wherein said step c further comprises a step of informing said caller of a second telephone number for him to make said second inbound

call, said second telephone number being different from a first telephone number which said caller has dialed for his first inbound call.

18. A method for a call center to establish a successful conversation between an agent and a caller when no agent is immediately available to said caller, comprising the steps of:

- 5
- a. after receiving a first inbound call from said caller, automatically assigning and keeping a place for said caller in a waiting queue;
 - b. assigning an identification for said caller and electrically instructing said caller to call back in a time window, of which he will be informed later,
 - 10 to claim his place in the queue;
 - c. disconnecting said inbound call;
 - d. assigning said time window to said caller;
 - e. electrically informing said caller of said time window; and
 - f. upon receiving a second inbound call from said caller in said time
 - 15 window, verifying said identification of said caller and resuming his place in said waiting queue.

19. The method of claim 18 wherein said time window is determined by an average waiting time that each caller has to wait in the queue for an available agent.

20. The method of claim 18 further comprising a step of, before step c, prompting said caller to selectively input instructions and information regarding how said caller shall be informed of said time window.

21. The method of claim 18 wherein said step d comprises a step of electrically dialing a telephone of said caller and hanging up before said caller answers.

22. The method of claim 21 wherein said hanging up is effectuated after one ring of said telephone.

23. The method of claim 21 wherein said dialing is carried out at the beginning of said time window.

5 24. The method of claim 23 wherein said time window is determined and begins just before or when an agent is actually available to said caller.

25. The method of claim 18 wherein said step d is implemented by sending a message through a packet-based network to an internet address of said caller.

10 26. The method of claim 18 wherein said step d is implemented by sending a message to a pager of said caller.

27. The method of claim 18 wherein said step b further comprises the steps of:
automatically assigning an approximate time point to said caller around
which said caller will be informed of said time window; and
electrically informing said caller of said approximate time point.

15 28. The method of claim 27 wherein said appropriate time is automatically determined on an average waiting time that each caller has to wait in the queue before an agent is available to him.

29. The method of claim 18 wherein said identification is a telephone number of a telephone by which said first inbound call is placed by said caller.

20 30. The method of claim 29 wherein said telephone number is automatically retrieved by an automatic number identification system of said call center.

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31. The method of claim 18 wherein said step b further comprises a step of electrically informing said caller of said identification, and said step e further comprises a step of prompting said caller to provide said identification.

32. The method of claim 18 further comprising a step of informing said caller of a second telephone number for him to make said second inbound call, said second telephone number being different from a first telephone number which said caller has dialed for his first inbound call.

33. A method for a call center to establish a successful conversation between an agent and a caller when no agent is immediately available to said caller, comprising the steps of:

- a. after receiving a first inbound call from said caller, automatically assigning and keeping a place for said caller in a waiting queue;
- b. assigning an identification to said caller;
- c. instructing said caller to call back later;
- d. disconnecting said call; and
- e. upon receiving a second inbound call from said caller, verifying said caller by said identification and resuming said place of said caller in said waiting queue.

34. The method of claim 33 wherein said step e further comprises a step of bumping said place of said caller up to the top of said queue if said caller calls back after a time of his turn in said queue.

35. The method of claim 33 wherein said step c further comprising a step of assigning a time to said caller and informing said caller to call back before said assigned time so as to claim his place in said queue.

36. The method of claim 35 wherein said step e further comprises a step of bumping said place of said caller up to the top of said queue if said caller calls back before said assigned time but after a time of his turn in said queue.

37. The method of claim 35 further comprising a step of erasing said place of said caller in said queue after said assigned time.

38. The method of claim 33 wherein said step c further comprises a step of assigning a time window and informing said caller of said time window within which said caller shall call back to claim his place in said queue.

39. The method of claim 33 further comprising a step of keeping said place of said caller at the top of said queue after a time of said caller's turn until receiving said second inbound call from said caller.

40. The method of claim 38 wherein said step e further comprising a step of bumping said place of said caller to the top of said queue if said caller calls back within said time window but after a time of his turn in said queue.

41. The method of claim 33 further comprising a step of, after step d, reminding said caller at a time of his turn.

42. The method of claim 41 wherein said step of reminding comprises a step of electrically dialing a telephone of said caller and hanging up before said caller answers.

43. The method of claim 38 further comprising a step of, after step d, reminding said caller to call back.

44. The method of claim 43 wherein said step of reminding is implemented just before or when said time window begins.

5 45. The method of claim 43 wherein said step of reminding is implemented when an agent is actually available to said caller.

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10 46. The method of claim 33 wherein further comprising a step of, before said step d, assigning a second telephone number to said caller and instructing said caller to dial said second telephone number to call back, said second telephone number being different from a first telephone number by which said caller made said first inbound call.

47. The method of claim 33 wherein further comprising a step of erasing said place of said caller after a conversation is established between an agent and said caller.

48. A system in a call center for processing an inbound call from a caller, comprising:

15 means for automatically assigning and keeping a place to said caller upon receipt of an inbound call of said caller;

means for assigning an identification to said caller and for verifying said identification;

20 means for assigning a time window for said caller within which said caller shall call back to claim his place in said queue;

means for electrically informing said caller of said time window and instructing him to call back within said time window; and

means for resuming said place of said caller when said identification of

said caller is verified.

49. The system of claim 48 further comprising means for electrically reminding said caller when said time window begins.

50. The system of claim 48 further comprising means for electrically reminding said caller when an agent is available to said caller.

51. The system of claim 48 wherein said means for assigning and verifying identification comprises an automatic number identification system that can automatically retrieving a telephone number of an inbound call.

52. The system of claim 48 further comprising means for electrically prompting said caller to provide said identification upon receiving an inbound call of said caller.

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